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ABSTRACT

Assuming that education will continue to need governance at the state level by agencies responsible for planning, organizing, maintaining, and improving a statewide public system of education and that wide departmental variations will remain nationwide, the author makes several predictions concerning new roles to be played by state education departments of the future. He contends, in part, that there will be a major shift of responsibility for decisions on the methods of school financing, sources of funds, and the methods of fund distribution away from local boards to state legislatures. At the same time, he explains, there will also be a change in the channeling of federal funds -- through and into state monies rather than directly to and through local districts. The author sees the state education department of the future as a huge clearinghouse of information that will provide a statewide network disseminating educational data to regional and local districts and one that will act as a retrieval agent plugged into national and federal information sources. According to the author, state personnel will become more knowledgeable and sophisticated in the planning, evaluation, information dissemination, and technical assistance aspects of state governance. In addition, these people will be selected from and based in large urban areas with field responsibilities to include attending meetings and organizing and directing educational seminars in regional areas. (JF/EA)

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STATE LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION IN THE 1970's: Changes Likely to Occur in State Departments of Education*

If we turned the clock back 20 years and conducted a survey of the professional educational community concerning their knowledge of and expectations for State departments of education, the results would have been gloomy. Teachers, administrators, and local school board members would probably have concluded that State educational agencies exercised a few regulatory functions and beyond that made little difference one way or the other. If the survey would have gone further to encompass a sampling of lay citizens the results would probably have shown that even the existence of such agencies would not have been widely known. Of course there would have been considerable variance in this profile from one State to another.

Many changes have come about in the last 20 years. Dr. Morphet has addressed the recent developments in societal change and has amply addressed the future possibilities for the continuing aspects of such change.

The purpose of this paper will be to follow Dr. Morphet's well perceived direction and discuss the future changes that might be expected to occur during the remainder of the 70's in State departments of education. First, it is necessary to establish a few premises or assumptions in order that the commentary to follow will not be viewed as totally unrealistic. One such assumption is that education being a State function will continue to experience a need for governance at the State level by a responsible agency whose primary function

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it is to plan for, organize, maintain, and improve a Statewide public system of education. The scope of such an agency's future work may very well increase to the point where a single agency is responsible for all public education within a State and indeed may have a great many more interagency responsibilities prescribed. Such interagency responsibilities may include the integration of education, health, welfare, and environmental programs and services. This pattern may be particularly likely if the courts become involved in massive redistricting in metropolitan areas. As the State must accommodate such wide changes in organizational and financial structures it would be a likely time to analyze and redefine functional responsibilities of the affected governmental services.

Also, it should be pointed out that there will still be wide variations in the departments across the Nation. This is as it should be. These differences will be responsive to the varying populations, the different economic and social conditions, the varying conditions and customs, the decisions of the courts, and will be reflected in the voice of the public in the activities of State legislatures, the governor, State boards of education, and other bodies concerned with education. There will still be another important influence--that of the Federal Government because the State department of education is midway between the Federal Government and the local school systems and reflects national concerns as well as State and local concerns. On this point, the late James Allen predicted, "The departments will be the focal point for a major recasting of the educational system in line with new perspectives on our national purposes."

The role of State departments of education will change considerably during the 70's, and the focus of services of the staffs will gradually be altered. To accommodate new

and expanded services, the internal organization of State departments of education will be modified. What is more, the overall structure of education will be adjusted in a number of States to meet new conditions. There will be new types of relationships with the State legislature, the Federal Government, local school systems, and educational associations and organizations concerned with elementary and secondary education and there will be better ways of keeping the public informed on the outputs of the schools.

In the few minutes that I have, I will be able to point out only a few of the many changes that will likely occur. Perhaps the greatest change the visitor will notice will be a consequence of the effect of the drastic revisions that will take place in State financing of elementary and secondary education. The 70's will be a decade of revolutionary changes in school finance--both in how and where we get the money for the schools and how the State allocates its resources to local school systems. Resource allocation will be based on a more scientific approach involving goals, objectives, and evaluation. I need not dwell on the court decisions that have recently occurred, but one thing we may be quite certain about, the local property tax will not be the major support for local schools. State funding will provide a large share of the operation costs for local schools. As this happens the State department of education will become the advocate to the State legislature for the major portion of the funds for local schools. This places the State department of education in a new relationship with the State legislature in most States. Responsibility for decisions on how the schools are to be financed, where the money comes from, and how it is to be distributed will be transferred in large part from local boards to the State legislatures.

Moreover the competition for the tax dollar at the State level will be keener in 1980. To make the necessary decisions, State legislatures will require information that is not now generally available to them.

To have this information for justifying the budget for the schools in the State, the departments will need to develop sophisticated planning, evaluation, and reporting capabilities. These functional units will continue to occupy a more important and strategical place in the organization and operation of the SEA's. No less important will be the effect of new patterns of Federal financing. There will likely be block grants and general support for education from the Federal Government. Because State systems of financing education will be geared to more nearly approach equality of educational opportunities, Federal funds for general support and even special support will simply be added to the regular State fund distribution systems.

State coordinators and staff for the many Federal categorical programs will no longer be present in the departments. Fewer personnel will be associated with the paperwork involved in Federal projects. Instead the personnel will be concerned with planning, evaluation, information dissemination, and expert technical assistance including the presentation to a wide variety of publics and the State legislature of a current status picture of the State's educational program and the areas of greatest unmet needs.

In the future, a broader role for State departments of education will be to plan and effect improvements in the State in the educational system and to assess and evaluate the progress that is being made. They will see an enhanced need for comprehensive

State planning for education. Goals and objectives for education will be better defined and more precisely developed. Strategies will have been perfected for continuous needs assessment for education and the establishment of priorities. One will note the close linkage between these needs and priorities and the budget requests to State legislatures and the distribution of State funds. Assessment and evaluation systems for determining the degree to which the educational goals are being met throughout the State will be in continuous operation. Improved testing programs for determining pupil achievement will be one of the major tools for assessment. Furthermore, assessment of noncognitive development will become an important part of the evaluation program. A network (a unified system) of planning and evaluation activities in which those of the local school districts interface with those of the State department of education will be envisioned. New information systems will include information on the outputs of the educational system and reflect the progress of pupils, in addition to information on dollars expended per pupil, teachers' salaries, average daily attendance, teacher certification, and the like. These new reporting systems will be geared to providing the legislatures, the Congress, and the public with accountability information on the outputs of the educational system.

With greater State funding, State departments of education will become involved in the matter of teacher salaries and negotiations. Relationships with educational associations will be different. As the distribution systems for State funds address more precisely the varying pupil needs and especially those of target groups, departments will become more deeply involved with local school budgets. Much staff time will be devoted to

maintaining and keeping up-to-date the distribution formulas which provide differentials for groups of pupils whose educational needs require additional or more expensive expenditures than do the normal pupil.

Significant change in staffing patterns will be noticeable in the future. More personnel will be recruited from larger school districts and urban areas. The old saying that State departments of education are departments for rural areas only will no longer be true. While the small school district will not disappear, there will be fewer of them. The staff will be working for the most part with larger districts. The kind of service provided by departments to large districts with professional staffs possessing a wide range of competencies will be quite different from the services needed by small districts that do not have this expertise.

Staff members will spend a great deal of time in regional and other group meetings, conferences, and seminars concerned with new technological developments and the spreading of good practices. Inservice education for school personnel within the State as well as for the department itself will occupy a high place among the activities of the department. The staffs of the departments will be better trained and will focus more of their attention on producing desirable change that is beneficial to the educational program. The use of task forces in the department will be greatly expanded and commonplace. These task forces will be used in solving new problems and developing strategies for action. Flexibility will become a more important criterion for internal organization of the departments and task forces will serve this objective. Evidences of the sophistication of the staffs in

modern methods of management and the application of scientific approaches to the administrative efforts of the department will be commonplace. These management capabilities will compare favorably with the best in industry.

State departments of education will be the centers of educational information in the State. Technological developments will make the department the center of a State network which provides the school systems in the State with almost immediate information on the results of research, studies, and desirable practices on all aspects of the educational program and its administration. The State system will be able to plug into the nationwide system and obtain information from wherever it is available.

There are a number of forces developing which seek to alter the overall structure and the place the department occupies in this setting. Already Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Illinois have modified this organizational setting. Indiana, New Jersey, and several others are presently considering changes.

The growth of community colleges and higher educational institutions, and the consequent increased funding required have resulted in demands for greater coordination of the total educational enterprise of the State. The governor, as he sees a larger portion of the State budget go to education, is also concerned with coordination.

It is difficult at this time to predict the shape of the overall structural modifications that will occur in the immediate years ahead. As a matter of fact, a new project on governance in education has just been funded through Section 505 of Title V, which is designed to provide guidance and point the way for such changes. I will not pre-guess the results of the study.

Whether or not any of these predictions materialize will depend to a great extent upon the emphasis we as a Nation will give education in the future. If we in education can successfully cope with a few of the more compelling problems of today the outlook for tomorrow is promising. If we fail to successfully deal with some of the more difficult problems of today, we may be on the verge of impairing the quality of our public school system. Time and perseverance will hold the answer.